WORK FOR THE BLIND IN CHINA

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WORK FOR THE BLIND IN CHINA.

BY MISS CONSTANCE F. GORDON-CUMMING.

A sighted Chinaman learning to read his own book, must be able to recognize at sight, at least 4,000 complicated characters. But in Mandarin Chinese, as spoken at Peking, there are only 408 distinct sounds. Mr. W. H. Murray, an English missionary, much interested in the Chinese blind, therefore, strove to find some method by which to represent these 408 sounds to the fingers of the blind. By the system of embossed dots, arranged by Mr. Braille, and now generally used for teaching the blind to read throughout Europe, sixty-two symbols can be produced. By these he represents the twenty-four letters of our alphabet, and various syllables, also musical notes. But the Chinese have no alphabet, so that it is necessary to represent each of the 408 sounds. Mr. Murray solved this difficulty by MAKING THE EMBOSSED DOTS REPRESENT NUMERALS, the same group of dots

* Information will gladly be given, or contributions received, by Mrs. James Watt, Sunny Acres, Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

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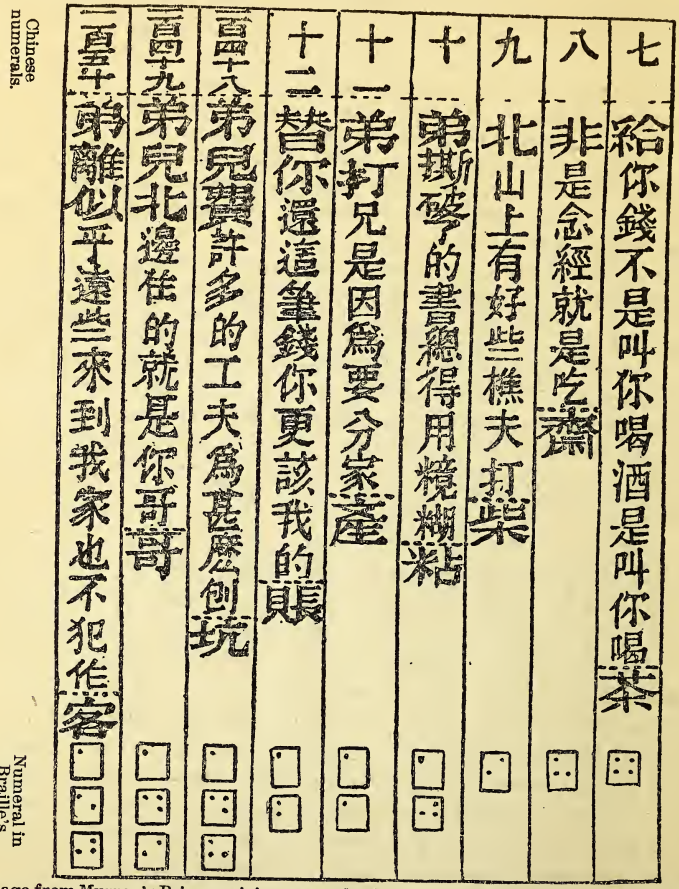
differently placed representing units, tens, and hundreds. Just as we write 4, 40 or 400, using only ten figures to represent any extent of numbers. Thus it becomes quite simple to represent any numeral whatsoever.

He then numbered the 408 sounds of Mandarin Chinese. Thus No. 1 stands for A, No. 2 stands for Ai, No. 3 represents An, No. 6 suggests Cha, No. 13 is Chang, and so on.

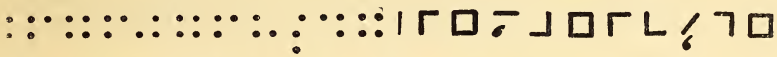


A page from Murray's Primer, giving a sample of the four thousand Chinese symbols, and their simple equivalent in embossed dots, which in no case exceed three groups, representing units, tens, and hundreds.

The pupils having learnt this list by heart (which they do with remarkable facility) thenceforth find that the touch of the dots representing any numeral instinctively suggests the corresponding sound (just as in our language, the sight of certain letters of the alphabet suggests certain sounds).

The second stage in Mr. Murray's invention, and one which prom-

ises to prove of incalculable value, was the adaptation of this same system to the use of sighted persons, by the very simple method of USING BLACK LINES PLAINLY VISIBLE TO THE EYE, INSTEAD OF THE RAISED WHITE DOTS, EMBOSSED FOR THE FINGERS OF THE BLIND.



Specimens of numerical symbols embossed for the blind.

Numerical symbols printed in black for the sighted, by filling in the outline between the points.

As it has been fully proved that the most ignorant peasants, both blind and sighted, can by this system learn to read and write fluently in periods varying from one to three months, it is evident that this invention is calculated to prove of the utmost value to the illiterate converts IN ALL PROVINCES WHERE MANDARIN CHINESE IS SPOKEN, AND AS THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF ABOUT THREE HUNDRED MILLIONS of the inhabitants of China, it must be admitted that the field open to Mr. Murray and his pupils is a pretty large one, and surely all who desire to spread the knowledge of the Gospel in that vast land may well not only wish him success, but also do all in their power to further his very uphill work.

Besides conferring on these poor creatures the ability to read for themselves the Word of God, Mr. Murray trusts that he has herein found the solution of one of his gravest difficulties, namely, how to enable his blind pupils to earn their own living. A few are doing so as organists at mission stations. In common industrial work the sighted Chinamen can always undersell the blind. But if once a considerable demand arises for books in the numeral type, Mr. Murray hopes to provide an inexhaustible supply of work for his blind as compositors, distributors of type, and teachers. The actual printing has hitherto been done by sighted persons.

The blind pupils are found to be successful teachers of others, both blind and sighted. A striking instance of this was early given, when at the request of Mrs. Allardyee (an Australian lady at one of the other missions at Peking), Mr. Murray sent a blind girl to teach her and a party of very ignorant farm women from a distance. Within *one week* Mrs. Allardyee had effectually mastered the system, as had also one of her Bible-women, who wrote a letter to Mr. Murray, without a single mistake. The same thing has been done by various other intelligent pupils. As regards the farm women, all the party, taught only by blind Hannah, returned to their homes in periods varying from one to three months, able not only to read anything at sight, but also to write letters to their kind hostess at Peking.

Blind Peter, who has recently died, was one of Mr. Murray's earliest pupils, when the work was quite in its infancy, and known only to a

very few of his immediate neighbors. But the strange fancy of the foreign book-hawker who cared for the blind so practically as to admit several to share his own humble home, soon became known among these poor creatures, and one morning there came to his door two brothers, aged twelve and fourteen, whose parents had recently died of fever, in a town 150 miles distant, leaving their children destitute.

These boys had accordingly begged their way to the capital, and there the oldest brother besought Mr. Murray to take charge of his blind brother, saying that he himself could earn his own living, but could not provide for two without begging, which he shrank from doing. So Mr. Murray agreed to keep this little lad awhile, to see whether he was capable of learning, and the brother promised to return ere long, to see how he prospered. But evidently fearing lest the blind lad should be returned to his care, the elder brother did not return for two years, by which time the bright little fellow had proved himself an eminently satisfactory scholar—the best hand at stereotyping, and most reliable in all departments of work, and having, moreover, the markt talent for music, which in due time led to his appointment as organist of the London mission at Peking.

When the elder brother returned, Mr. Murray took him into the school, and without speaking a word, placed his hand in that of the younger, who instantly recognized the touch, and great was the joy of both in talking over their varied experiences. Of course, there was no further question of Peter resuming his travels. It was plain that he was on the way to earn his own living by teaching others, and making himself useful in a thousand ways, and thence forward this has been his never-failing record. By degrees he rose to be Mr. Murray's right-hand man in all departments of the school, taking charge of all new pupils on their arrival, and teaching them most successfully. He was also a very earnest and persuasive preacher.

When in May, 1890, Mr. Murray attended the Great Missionary Conference, held at Shanghai, he took with him blind Peter, as a most practical illustration of the results of his system of teaching the blind, and Peter's excellent reading, writing, and playing on the church organ, won for him enthusiastic appreciation from that great assemblage gathered from all parts of China.

Naturally, on his return to Peking, Peter's fame went abroad, and doubtless was not without its influence in captivating a very pleasant-looking sighted girl, who, having been brought up in a Christian school, was allowed the unheard-of privilege of selecting her husband from an available half dozen young men. She unhesitatingly selected Peter, as being the best, cleverest, and best-looking of the lot, and they seem to have been a very happy couple during their brief years of married life.

BLIND FORTUNE TELLER, NOW PREACHER.

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Alas! while Mr. Murray was absent in Scotland he received letters from Peter, telling of failing strength. He was apparently a victim of the dread consumption, which has proved fatal to so many of the most promising students. He wrote that he feared he would have past away ere his dear friend returned to Peking, but happily, he and they were spared that trial. It was not till about the beginning of March that Peter was translated from his life-long physical darkness to the unspeakable joy of "beholding the King in His beauty" in the land where there is no need of the sun, because the Lamb is Himself the light thereof.

In 1892 the delapidated old Chinese house which was on the little property when it was bought for this mission, was condemned as being unfit to live in, its inhabitants being literally washed out of it, and their goods destroyed by the violent annual downpours of summer rain. Repeated appeals have been made to the public to supply the necessary funds for rebuilding it. But Mr. Murray has all along urged that, instead of spending a considerable sum on rebuilding on the present cramped site, which would necessitate the house being now made two stories high—a detail very seriously objected to by the Chinese—we should endeavor to raise a sum sufficient to secure the adjoining premises, on which are Chinese houses, which can easily be adapted for the purposes required. This would permanently benefit the mission, as it would secure ample space for the extension of the Blind School and development of the printing works, instead of everything being crowded, as it now is, with no space even to accomodate pupils, either blind or sighted, desirous of lodging at the mission while being taught.

There can be no question as to the great advantages involved. Hitherto, however, the subscriptions received have not proved sufficient for even the minor outlay, so that Mr. Murray's larger hope was not seriously entertained till a letter was received from a self-supporting missionary lady to say that she considers the acquisition of this property so essential, that (although the risk of a permanent reduction of her small income is a serious matter to herself) she has decided to guarantee £1,000 of the whole cost, provided that steps are at once taken to secure the property and to raise the balance of the money. Instructions to this effect have accordingly been sent to the Committee at Peking, in faith that the requisite sum—*about* £1,700—will be forthcoming, for it is earnestly hopt that those who sympathize with Mr. Murray's work will not allow this generous missionary lady to be called upon to meet her guarantee.*

* Since the above article has been printed we have received another much more complete from Miss Gordon-Cumming, which we will print in a later issue. This work strongly deserves our hearty support. Subscriptions of any amount will be gratefully received by the Treasurer, Mr. James Drummond, 59 Bath Street, Glasgow; or by the editor of this REVIEW.

POLYGAMOUS APPLICANTS.—IV.

WHAT MISSIONARIES THINK SHOULD BE DONE WITH THEM.

BY REV. DANIEL L. GIFFORD, SEOUL, KOREA.

Replies Recommending Admission or Favoring Leniency.

China.—*Rev. J. Hudson Taylor* (China Inland Mission), Shanghai.

The China Inland Mission has no mission rules as to church formation and discipline; being interdenominational, each missionary forming a church organizes it in the way he believes to be most scriptural. The mission secures that the organization adopted by the first missionary or missionaries shall be maintained by his successors. I can therefore only give you my own opinions.

To the first question, I should decidedly reply, No. If there be good reason to believe that a man is regenerate, and has therefore received the Holy Spirit as earnest and seal, the question of Peter, Acts 10 : 47, is in point. To the second, I should reply in the affirmative, under the condition that he proved faithful to his wives, did not add to their number, and sought their conversion. Of course, he would be precluded from holding office in the church. As to your third question, so far from being *required* to put away I should say he was not at liberty to put away any wife to whom he was legally married, unless she had been unfaithful to him. Adultery is the only ground our Savior allows for putting away.

To your fourth question, I should reply, by all means baptize her. The above conclusions seem to me sustained by our Savior's requirement that adultery be the only lawful cause of divorce, and by His further statement that a woman divorced for any other reason is caused to commit adultery. A man therefore putting away a woman because she is his second wife, being an inciter to adultery ought to be disciplined if he were in the church (Matt. 5 : 32 and 19 : 9). If any of the wives voluntarily wisht to separate from the husband, they could do so by mutual agreement, but such wives must remain unmarried, in which case the husband would, of course, be responsible for maintenance. The only case in which separation brings freedom, is that mentioned in I. Cor. 7 : 15, in which the unbelieving husband or wife takes the responsibility and will not dwell with the believer. During an acquaintance of mission work in China of over forty years, I have seen the practical working in our own and other missions, both of the Scriptural method I have referred to above, and of the mistaken one, which some think necessary. In the former case I have known both the wives and all the children converted and living together in a happy home; in the latter case I have seen great hatred to the Gospel developt in the case of the one put away; I have seen such distress occasioned that the husband has felt constrained to take the woman back again, has given up his connection with the church, and instead of being a believer, has become an opponent. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." Putting away inflicts the most grievous wrong on helpless and unoffending women.

Rev. Hunter Corbett, D.D. (N. Presbyterian), Chefoo.

Some years ago a missionary of much experience persuaded an applicant for baptism that it was his duty to put away a second wife previous to baptism. Soon after the missionary received a visit from the second wife, who questioned him somewhat in the following manner. "What authority have you to demand my husband to send me away and dishonor me before all my kindred

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